

CALL Centre

Communication Aids for Language and Learning



C ALL Centre

Annual Report
2006 - 2007



CALL Centre Annual Report

April 2006 to March 2007

The CALL Centre provides services and carries out research and development projects, working with all those involved in meeting the needs of people who require augmentative communication and/or specialised technology use, particularly in education.

CALL Centre, 2006 - 2007

The CALL Centre has had another productive and successful year, with senior staff contributing to development of national policy through for example, the Books for All project, work with the SQA to introduce Accessible Digital Exam Papers, liaising with Learning and Teaching with regard to the Accessibility of Glow, and the Routes for Learning Study Day. More detailed information about these topics is contained elsewhere in this report. The CALL Centre continues to provide a service for the Scottish educational community at local authority level, as well as working directly with individual pupils, staff and families through assessment, equipment loans, staff training and the provision of information.

By working at a strategic level and 'on the ground', the CALL team is able to identify issues and approaches to good practice, and feed these back into policy and into new development work. Three key National Issues have emerged through the varied work of the Centre over the course of the year:

1. Disability Discrimination and Access

Over recent years legislation and guidance has been put into place which should ensure that pupils with additional support needs can have appropriate access to the curriculum in Scotland. Significant progress has been made, but disabled pupils can still face many obstacles in their educational experience, particularly with regard to access to information through ICT:

- Networked systems create significant difficulties for many pupils with disabilities because systems are restrictive and prevent or delay necessary specialised software and hardware peripherals from being installed, or prevent staff making adjustments to the operating system.
- In some instances difficulties seem to arise from contractual agreements between local authorities and managed network providers which do not have regard to the duties on both the purchaser and provider to meet their commitments under DDA legislation.
- Specific issues arise around allocation of legacy systems for pupils with disabilities so that they can be used stand-alone and not attached to the network.
- New online services are not always designed with accessibility at their core, but give the impression of having accessibility tagged on in their later stages of development.



CALL has been addressing these issues by working with individual local authorities, as well as writing to ADES, ASLO and other bodies, but more needs to be done to ensure that pupils with additional support needs can access computers in schools, particularly given the development of Glow. We believe there is a lack of awareness among management and technical staff of these accessibility issues. CALL has a role to play in bringing different parties together to seek solutions.

2. Accessible Books and Learning Resources

Through the 'Books for All' project, CALL has played a leading part in raising awareness of the difficulties faced by pupils who cannot easily access standard print. There have been a number of positive developments, but more needs to be done:

- Most local authorities are now able to provide curriculum materials in Braille or large print, but these do not address the needs of pupils with a physical difficulty in holding a book, or turning a page or those with learning difficulties or hearing impairment. These pupils need materials in an accessible print, audio or digital format.

CALL Centre, 2006 - 2007

- Some pupils (those with a visual impairment, or certain physical disabilities) are provided with accessible material under the Disability Discrimination Act and copyright exemption legislation, but many more with additional support needs are denied access to accessible copies as they are not covered by copyright exemption.
- There is massive duplication of effort by staff in different schools creating accessible versions of the same materials.

The Books for All report, which was in draft form at the end of this year, contains a number of ways in which local authorities, national government and agencies and voluntary organizations can address these issues and we hope that this will be taken forward in 2007-08.

3. Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment for Pupils with Severe and Complex Additional Support Needs

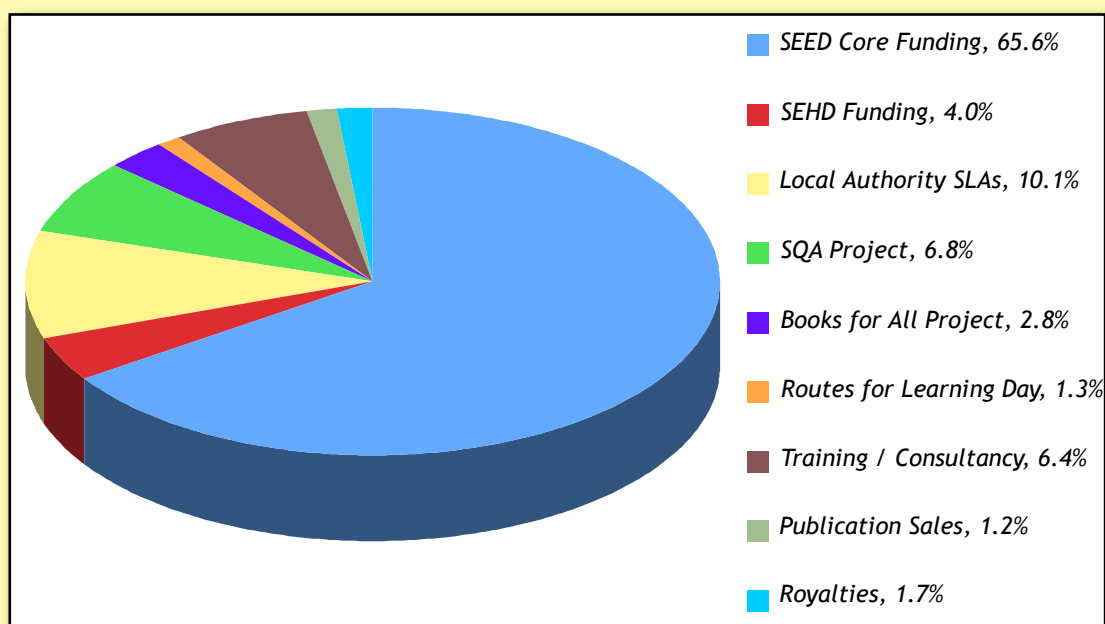
CALL has spent over twenty years supporting such pupils in schools and has led the way with projects such as 'Personal Communication Passports' and 'Listening to Children', and bringing 'Routes for Learning' to Scotland. Again, more needs to be done:

- While children with severe and complex additional support needs are increasingly located within mainstream schools, they are not fully included and are not accessing appropriate curricula.
- In some cases pupils with severe and complex additional support needs are being taught by teachers lack the appropriate experience, knowledge and training to appropriately adapt the curriculum.
- While there is a statutory requirement for teachers of pupils with sensory impairments to have specialist training, no such requirement exists for teachers of pupils with severe and complex disabilities.

CALL has raised all of these issues with appropriate organisations within Scottish

Income

In 2006-2007 CALL generated an income of £451,864 to support the work of the Centre.



CALL Centre, 2006 - 2007

education during the year and will continue to seek progress until the educational needs of all pupils with additional support needs are adequately addressed.

Staff from the CALL Centre have been involved in many other activities during the course of the year, but there is not sufficient space to cover all of this work in detail in this report. We hope that the summaries and the more detailed examples provided for each of the Centre's main areas of work will demonstrate the continuing impact of the CALL Centre within the education community in Scotland.

Staffing

We welcomed a new secretary, Rebecca Gow, who started work part-time at CALL in May 2006. We were sorry to lose Neel Shearer, CALL's Technical Officer, in November 2006 but pleased that Robert Stewart is joining the CALL team to replace him (starting April 2007).

- Sally Millar, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist & Joint Coordinator
- Paul Nisbet, Engineer, Educational Technologist & Joint Coordinator
- Stuart Aitken, Psychologist & Visual Impairment Specialist
- Sandra O'Neill, Teacher & Training Services Coordinator
- Fionna Balfour, Specialist Teacher
- Allan Wilson, Information Coordinator
- Robert Stewart, Technology Officer
- Sarah Marjoribanks, Administrator
- Rebecca Gow, Senior Secretary

Steering Group, 2006 - 2007

Thanks are due to past and present members for their invaluable advice and support over the past year:

- Debbie Clelland, Scottish Executive Education Department
- David Miller, Scottish Executive Education Department
- Margaret Cooper (ADES representative), Education Officer, East Dunbartonshire Council
- Morag Dorward, Tayside Primary Care NHS Trust (until August 2006)
- Grant Douglas, User representative
- Eddie Follan, Policy Development Manager, Children in Scotland (until August 2006)
- Alan Haughey (ASPEP representative), Midlothian Psychological Service
- George Hutchison, Coordinator, Support for Pupils (Early Years), Perth and Kinross Council
- Professor Martyn Roebuck (Chair)
- John Ravenscroft, Coordinator, Scottish Sensory Centre
- Sheila Riddell, Professor of Inclusion and Diversity, Moray House School of Education
- Margaret Watson, Learning and Teaching Scotland

Research, Development & Collaboration

SQA Digital Question Papers

The digital question papers that were developed and trialled by CALL and SQA in 2005 were successfully used by 31 pupils 'for real' in 105 examinations in May 2006. The pilot trials were evaluated by means of questionnaires completed by staff and pupils and a detailed report covering the context for the project, the authoring process, analysis of the staff and pupil questionnaire, and analysis of the marks achieved by the pupils, was prepared and delivered to SQA. The report and other resources are now available on a dedicated 'mini-site' created by CALL (<http://www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk>).

The pilot project was very successful, and all the students who completed the questionnaires said that digital question papers should be offered alongside the other types of adapted paper. Candidates found typing into the papers on-screen to be faster, easier, less stressful and for some pupils with physical difficulties, less painful than handwriting. Pupils who used the text-reader software commented that it offered more privacy and independence than using a human reader.

Staff were of the opinion that pupils were more confident, independent and motivated when using the digital papers. Staff felt that the need for extra accommodation and staff resources was reduced by using the digital papers, compared with traditional methods such as human readers and scribes. SQA analysis revealed no measurable differences between the estimated and actual results obtained by the candidates using the digital papers: the digital papers do not therefore appear to give any advantage or disadvantage compared to other methods of support.

The pilot will be repeated on a larger scale in May 2007 and we hope that SQA will make the papers generally available from 2008 if this second pilot also proves successful.

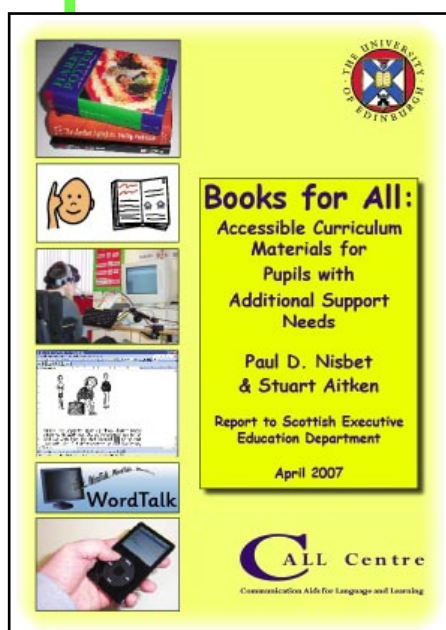
We believe that this is the first time that any qualification authority has offered digital question papers for use by pupils with additional support needs and the project has attracted interest from the press and from outwith Scotland.

Books for All

Following the very successful symposium on *Accessible Digital Curriculum Resources* that was held in March 2006, SEED funded Paul Nisbet and Dr. Stuart Aitken to undertake a two phase research project to investigate the need for and availability of alternative accessible formats of printed learning materials.

Local authorities are obliged to consider how learning materials in accessible formats can be provided for pupils with disabilities 'if the pupil may have difficulty reading information provided in standard written form'¹. Many local authorities in Scotland already have transcription services to provide materials in Braille, large print or audio for pupils with visual impairment and Disability Discrimination legislation requires consideration of how this service can also be provided for other print-disabled pupils.

The draft report was delivered to SEED in March 2007 and the final version in May. The *Books for All* report was published on



¹Paragraph 64, Scottish Executive (2002) Planning to Improve Access to Education for Pupils with Disabilities; Guidance On Preparing Accessibility Strategies. ISBN 7559 10230 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/gpas-00.asp>.

Research, Development & Collaboration

the Scottish Government web site at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2007/06/05081600/0> and is also available at CALL's mini site at <http://www.booksforall.org.uk>.

In terms of the need for and the availability of accessible learning materials, the report brings together statistical data from the Scottish Executive and SQA, supplemented by questionnaires completed by teachers and educationalists. It concludes that "availability of books and other resources in Braille, Large Print and audio formats, for the relatively small number of blind and partially-sighted pupils, while not complete, is good, in comparison to the availability of accessible books for the much larger number of pupils with physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, learning difficulties, or hearing impairment"¹.

Pupils who have physical difficulties need books in digital or audio format, which can be accessed by assistive technologies; those with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia require books in digital format with text-reader software, or in audio, or in adapted print (i.e. larger font, larger spacing, on coloured paper); pupils with learning difficulties may need books in digital, audio or adapted print, or with symbol support, while hearing-impaired pupils may benefit from simplified language or video materials with signed language.

The report proposes a model of provision to help local authorities address the current inequalities of provision, and reduce the existing duplication of effort by developing mechanisms for sharing resources both within and between local authorities and other service providers.

We believe that the *Books for All* report is a significant piece of work which provides an evidential base and a clear pathway for developing provision of accessible learning materials which are essential to "enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society"². As RNIB point out; "If I can't read it, I can't learn it"³, and this applies to all pupils with print disabilities, not just those with a visual issue.

Smart Platform

In December 2006, after several years development, Smile Rehab delivered the first 'Smart Platform'. The Smart Platform is a flat mobile base with a Smart control system, designed for schools who want to offer the experience of independent mobility to as many pupils as possible. Although Smart chairs are already shared by children in schools, pupils often require quite different types of seating and it can be difficult to provide suitable seating on the Smart chair for every child. Consequently some children may not have an opportunity to use the chair at all, while for others it can take some time to adapt or adjust the seating every time a different child uses the chair. The Smart Platform is designed to give more children an opportunity to be mobile in school because the pupil can be wheeled on to the platform in their own manual wheelchair or buggy, and immediately start using it.



¹Page i, Nisbet, Paul D. and Aitken, S (2007) *Books for All: Accessible Curriculum Materials for Pupils with Additional Support Needs*, Scottish Executive. ISBN 7559 10230 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2007/06/05081600/0>.

²Scottish Executive (2004) *A Curriculum for Excellence*. ISBN: 0-7559-4215-9.

³RNIB Scotland (2005) *"If I can't read it, I can't learn it". The case for a National Educational Transcription Service for blind and partially sighted pupils and the outcome of the DAISY Project Evaluation*. RNIB Scotland, Edinburgh.

Research, Development & Collaboration

Dyslexia at Transition

CALL staff contributed to the development of the 'iPaper' dealing with ICT that was created by Pamela Deponio and colleagues in Moray House for the *Dyslexia at Transition* DVD. While the materials are of high quality CALL had some concerns with the limited range of ICT tools discussed, which reflected the relative lack of awareness by staff and pupils who were interviewed for the project. There is therefore a need to raise awareness and develop use of the full range of ICT on a more consistent basis across the country (including, for example, digital question papers and assessments, materials in alternative formats (*Books for All*), and use of text-to-speech software (e.g. *WordTalk*).

Personal Communication Passports

Sally Millar has developed a web-site for *Personal Communication Passports* which contains content she has created especially for it, including many downloads, through original development work and links with practitioners and professionals in other settings. Funding has been sought and approved from the University Knowledge Transfer Fund (for 2007-2008) for Sally to develop a DVD on *Personal Communication Passports*, in collaboration with Manchester University.

CALLtalk 2

Following the success of the original *CALLtalk* software application for a range of voice output devices, a demand has arisen for a revised/enhanced version able to take advantage of new features appearing on new generation of communication aids (e.g. SMS facilities, MP3 player etc.). Sally Millar has begun this process, jointly with colleague Dr. Janet Larcher. This work is being funded through royalties received from sales of the earlier versions of *CALLtalk*.

Collaborative Working

CALL has contributed to, or provided advice for, a number of projects led by other organisations during the course of the year. For example:

- CALL staff were members of the working group set up to advise on guidance for qualifications required for teachers of pupils with a visual impairment and / or hearing impairment.
- CALL provided consultancy for BBC *Jam* on symbols and literacy materials.
- CALL staff have advised the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People on issues relating to access to communication aids.
- CALL has advised Learning and Teaching Scotland with regard to accessibility of GLOW. A report was submitted to LTS.
- CALL contributed to the QMUC research project into Communication Support Needs.

Assessment and Support

CALL provides an assessment and support service for children in Scotland with additional support needs who might benefit from augmentative communication and / or information and communication technology.

- There was a slight reduction in the number of pupils referred to CALL for assessment in 2006-07 compared to the previous year (from 42 to 36) but we do not think it is significant because referrals in previous years have shown similar variation. At the same time, a number of the pupils referred to CALL have had particularly complex needs and have required more input from CALL over a longer period. The two case studies in this section illustrate the complexity of the assessment process.
- CALL assessment and support is funded from the SEED core grant and also through contracts with local authorities. Over the past year CALL, with SEED, has developed guidelines for referrers to clarify which services are funded by SEED and which require funding from the referring agency.
- Partnership and service level agreements were renewed with nine local authorities and discussions took place with another four. One or more of these authorities may wish to take out an agreement in 2007-08 and this has implications for CALL staffing. CALL attempts to strike a balance between research, development (both policy and practice) and service and an increase in service activity will alter this balance.
- Over the past year CALL has tested and refined tools and procedures for monitoring and reviewing progress following CALL Centre assessments. We are pleased to report that we feel that these procedures have improved the services provided to pupils by both CALL and the child's support team in school.

Case Study 1 - Accessing the Curriculum

CALL regularly sees pupils with physical disabilities who have difficulty accessing the curriculum. 'Peter' has cerebral palsy and was referred to CALL by the local authority ICT ASN development officer. Peter was unable to hold books or a pencil and although he could use a laptop computer keyboard and trackpad, it was very slow and tiring for him. Over the course of several assessment visits to trial different devices, the team (Peter, CALL staff, the local authority specialist, and the school staff) developed a more effective method of access whereby Peter now uses a 'chin pointer' to operate a compact keyboard and numberpad, giving him full independent control over his laptop.

In 2007 Peter left primary school and started at the local High School, and he carries his laptop, stand, keyboards and chin pointer on his electric wheelchair as he attends classes. In preparation for transition, the local authority specialist, with advice from CALL, established a team to scan and create digital versions of textbooks and other materials so that Peter can access books and also write and record independently.

Peter's story shows that there is no such thing as an 'assessment' which will provide 'the answer'. Developing an effective method of access takes a long time and involves the efforts of everyone involved with the pupil, but when it works, it has a huge impact on the young person's opportunities to access education and become included. Peter's story also demonstrates the need for CALL, as a national centre with specialist expertise and equipment, and for local authority expertise, to work 'on the ground' to support pupils, families and staff.

Assessment and Support

Case Study 2 - A Communication Aid User

A young child, 'Minnie', enters P1. She has cerebral palsy with complex mobility, hand function and eating and drinking difficulties, and no intelligible speech, but she is responsive, sociable and communicative, and appears quite cognitively able. In Nursery, she used a *BigMack* to tell 'News', and had been introduced to basic Mayer Johnson Picture communication Symbols (PCS). She seems to retain this knowledge.

Computer Access - Minnie cannot use a mouse or keyboard or even manage a rollerball or joystick. To access the curriculum and to record her work, she will have to use a single switch with an 'autoscanning' cursor (although we will assess whether she can use two switches as this is easier cognitively, less frustrating, and quicker than a single switch). The range of software she will be able to access is severely reduced, compared with classmates. Happily, there are some versatile and powerful 'flagship' applications such as *Clicker 4* (and now 5) that support switch access. We get her started on simpler 'single hit' programs such as *SwitchItMaker 2* and *PowerPoint*, to give her a sense of control, and to motivate her with fun and interesting materials (eg. talking stories) and then *ChooseltMaker 2*, to teach her to scan and make a selection from a range of options. All of this requires significant staff training and support.

Communication Aid - Concurrently, we consider how Minnie can express herself and participate actively in her education. 'Wait and see' is not an option, as she may become passive, but introducing complex and powerful voice output communication aid (VOCA) technology when she is developmentally too young (and when the staff are inexperienced) can be a mistake too. We supply a little symbol communication booklet with pages arranged in topics, and show staff how to do 'partner assisted scanning' ie they point to the rows and the symbols and Minnie signals (by smiling and clearly eye-pointing up to her right) when they point to the one she wants. We also suggest to staff a range of quick ways to get Minnie's answers, eg. pictures, symbols or words, numbers stuck on an ETRAN frame, to which she can eye point. She keeps her *BIGMack* for home/school news, and gets another one for use in story and game participation. Over the year, we try her out with various scanning VOCAs, such as a *TechScan 8*, a *TechSpeak 32* (which take paper overlays), and a *MightyMo* (dynamic screen device, with recorded speech). She responds well to the *MightyMo* which is more complex in some ways (she has to remember how to navigate around from the Top Page to different topic pages) but which can be made to match and develop upon her symbol book, and which has the potential to store more vocabulary (and so to be more interesting and useful). It is relatively easy for staff to program and is a good 'starter device' for Minnie who may manage of the most complex VOCAs, later.

All of this is a long term and ongoing process that highlights the need for different equipment loans from CALL, staff training, and continual formative assessment. There is no quick 'technical fix'.



Feedback

A short note to thank you for the extremely detailed report compiled in respect of the CALL referral made for R. Your report gives lots of reassuring advice in terms of options for supporting him, and I found the reading of the report a very productive learning experience.

(Educational Psychologist)

Information and Advice

- There has been a small increase in the number of enquires from 489 to 502 over the past year. Teachers, parents and others from the majority of Scotland's local authorities (29 out of 32) used the information service at some point during the year.
- There has been a small reduction in the number of hits, visits and items downloaded from the CALL Centre web site over the past year, but 5,132,170 hits, 288,570 visits and 326,082 books, information sheets, quick guides and other resources downloaded is still cause for satisfaction. We will monitor use of the web site and consider whether changes to content or design are required.
- The CALL site now has several 'mini-sites' dealing with *Personal Communication Passports*, the *Smart Wheelchair*, *WordTalk*, *Digital Examinations* and *Books for All*, which we hope will provide a focus for development and dissemination.
- There has been a significant reduction in sales of publications from over 900 to around 450. The pattern of sales over the past few years has been analysed and the main reason for the decrease is that CALL published some particularly popular books in recent years (*Personal Passports* and the *Listening to Children* series, and the ACP:S Proceedings) and the high initial demand for these publications has now declined.

A Wide Range of Enquiries

Every year CALL receives a wide range of enquiries from (usually) simple questions about the source of a piece of software to more complex requests for advice on the application of particular strategies in a school. The examples below will give a flavour of some of the work of the Information and Advice service.

- An Educational Psychologist emailed, "I am looking for TEACCH symbols for cards for use in school to save the little boy and teachers from my dreadful drawings. Could you advise please?" She was sent a detailed response stating that there was no recognised TEACCH symbol system, but outlining how to use Google to search for images; suggesting several useful web sites; stressing the need for consistency in image style, with the recommendation that a symbol set (either *PCS* or *Widgit Rebus* be considered; and discussing advantages and disadvantages of picture cards. We also sent a copy of a paper by Sally Millar which compared and contrasted different symbol systems. Feedback was very positive (see next page).
- The parents of a "bright" 11-year-old boy with dyslexia for whom a teacher had recommended the *Naturally-Speaking* speech recognition system for home use contacted CALL. They had downloaded training materials from the CALL web site which they had found useful, but their son was having difficulty in training the system to recognise his voice and was on the point of giving up. Detailed discussion suggested that there was a problem with the microphone that they were using, but that the main issue was with the choice of software - *NaturallySpeaking* is not always suitable for a young child. We sent information about microphones and a demo CD for *SpeakQ*, a speech recognition system that is more suitable for a young voice. Six weeks later the parents phoned again to say that a new microphone had made a difference and that *SpeakQ* had proved to be a revelation. For the first time their son had been able to consistently produce text independently and he loved using the program. They were very satisfied with the advice they had received from the CALL Centre and wanted to know where to get the full version of the software which had proved to be so useful for their son.

Information and Advice

The CALL Centre Web Sites

While we recognise that bare web statistics, particularly such figures as the number of 'hits' on a web site, are not very meaningful, it is very clear that a large number of people are making considerable use of the web site. There cannot be many organisations comparable in size to the CALL Centre, who are typically having almost one thousand documents and other resources downloaded from their web site every day! The most frequently downloaded resources were the *Quick Guide to the Word Equation Editor* (over 80,000 times!); *Augmentative Communication in Practice: An Introduction* and the new *Guide to Symbols and Picture Sets*.

New 'Mini' web sites have been created for *Personal Communication Passports*, the *Books for All* project, and the *Accessible Digital Exams* mini-site was updated with a sample digital paper and guidance notes for staff, pupils and parents to download and try out.

The slight (8%) decrease in the number of separate visits made to the CALL Centre web site may or may not be significant, but it does come as a surprise following a number of years of consistent increases. We suspect that there is a need for a major revamp of the web site, incorporating new resources, a more modern design, greater ease of use and improved accessibility. This will be a major task for our new Technology Officer in 2007 - 2008.

The CALL Centre Library

The CALL Centre Library is currently a reference library used by CALL staff, local teachers, therapists and students, with the occasional visitor from further afield. We plan to become a lending library during 2007 - 2008. As part of this change, we investigated the possibility of linking with the other libraries involved in the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability. Unfortunately, they were experiencing difficulties with integrating their library systems at the time and were reluctant to expand the number of libraries that they included.

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Personal Communication Passports

CALL Centre

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Personal Communication Passports are a practical and person-centred way of supporting children, young people and adults who cannot easily speak for themselves. Passports are a way of pulling complex information together and presenting it in an easy-to-follow format. They are easy to read, informative, useful and fun.

They have been developed by the CALL Centre!

Personal Communication Passports web site

This web site aims to provide guidance on the creation and use of Passports as well as information about Passport related Courses, Publications and Research.

Feedback

I am ecstatic! Thank you so much for sending me such a wonderfully helpful reply and enclosing Sally's Guide which is absolutely brilliant. Having sent the school my 'home-made's for this lad, I can't wait to get the information from you in the post. Have just got in and am now rushing out again to do so. I had given up when I got a terse response from TEACCH themselves but was so delighted with your helpfulness. Such things make a jobbing Educational Psychologist spin round the moon! Thank you both again - your assistance will be greedily devoured by parents, teachers and me!

(Educational Psychologist)

Continuing Professional Development

- Courses delivered in CALL continue to be small in number (9), compared with INSET delivered locally in schools or local authorities (45) across Scotland. Feedback from participants is good, with 68% 'very satisfied' and 31% 'satisfied' with the courses.
- There were fewer INSET courses (45) delivered this year compared with last (62) but the number of participants was similar (813 compared with 818 in 2005-06).
- CALL's stock of 12 laptop computers used for training is now over 3 years old and are becoming unreliable. We therefore intend to purchase new machines for training and to use any reliable older machines for loan purposes.
- Presentations were given at 11 conferences or Study Days, compared with 25 the previous year.
- A series of study days on Consulting with Children and Accessibility was commissioned by Moray Council and delivered by Sally Millar and Stuart Aitken.
- Sally Millar and Stuart Aitken contributed to the Working Group advising on Specialist Qualifications for Teachers of Deafblind Pupils.
- SEED funded a very successful Study Day organised and hosted by CALL to discuss and disseminate the Routes for Learning pack, which was produced in Wales and provides a flexible 'routemap' for practitioners to use as part of assessment and goal-setting for pupils with severe and complex difficulties.

Interactive Whiteboard courses

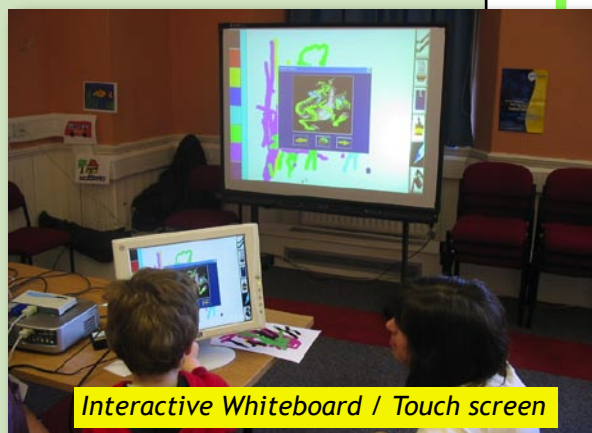
Many local authorities now provide training on the use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) for teachers, but these courses are often inadequate for teachers working with pupils with Additional Support Needs. CALL now provides training specifically aimed at such teachers, either in CALL, or as INSET, specifically tailored to their needs. CALL has experience of the different types of board available and on both Mac and PC.

Courses at CALL can cover:

- Introduction to IWBs - what is available and which are best suited to a diverse range of pupils
- Health and Safety issues
- Access to the IWB for pupils with more complex additional support needs
- Software suitable to use with an IWB
- Hands on - using different types of board
- Finding and using downloadable resources
- Creating resources for the board using a range of open framework software

Courses for individual schools and authorities are more specific and the content is planned with the needs of the staff and pupils discussed in detail so that the course is appropriate for that particular group. All courses cover a range of software that can be used, web sites that have suitable resources and hands-on time. There is also time to create resources appropriate for their own pupils which can be saved and used when back in class.

The IWB is also integrated into our other courses to show how its use can support teaching and learning across the curricular areas throughout the school.



Continuing Professional Development

Routes for Learning

CALL organised and hosted a major study day in February to introduce *Routes for Learning*, an excellent pack of assessment materials recently produced in Wales, to a Scottish audience. There has always been a shortage of good materials to support assessment and meaningful target setting for children with severe and complex additional support for needs. This pack attempts to address this need.

Jessie Wojciechowski from the Scottish Executive Education Department put the day into the context of the Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence* before handing over to Dr Verity Donnelly and Pauline Loftus to cover the assessment materials in detail.

Highlighting the core importance of communicative interaction and basic cognitive milestones, *Routes for Learning* recognises that children do not necessarily follow a set developmental path. The assessment materials provide a flexible 'routemap' helping the practitioner to plot the child's level in relation to a set of key behaviours ranging from "Notices stimuli" and "Reacts to close contact with a familiar adult" at the lower end through 43 steps to reach "Early problem solving" and "Initiates Actions to achieve desired result (exerting autonomy in variety of contexts)" at the top. The various steps are described in detail in the assessment materials and the pack also contains a DVD with video clips that clearly illustrate child behaviours exemplifying achievement of different stages on the Routemap.

The *Routes for Learning* materials are being piloted in Wales with considerable success and there was a general feeling within the audience of speech and language therapists and specialist teachers that much could be gained by introducing their use in Scotland. CALL hopes to be involved in the piloting of some of this material during 2007 - 2008.

Copies of the *Routes for Learning* pack can be obtained from the Qualifications and Curriculum Group, Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Castle Buildings Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1SX. The pack can now be downloaded from <http://accac.org.uk/eng/content.php?CID=3&PID=1309>.



Feedback

Thank you so much for a splendid session last night. Apart from breaking our record for attendance figures it was a wonderful mixture of techniques to keep everyone interested. The feedback in all the evaluations was hugely positive and appreciative and people seemed to find the ideas particularly applicable in all their different workplaces.

(Manager on Listening to Children training)

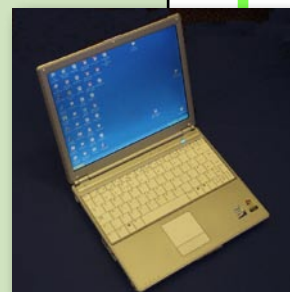
Loans and Technical Services

- 147 items of equipment with a total value of £50,100 were loaned to borrowers in 24 local authorities. This compares with 234 new loans during the course of the previous year. There is no obvious explanation for this decrease. Figures fluctuate from year to year and early indications suggest that there will be an increase in loans in 2007 - 2008.
- 39% of loans were provided for use by CALL assessment clients. Most of the other loans were provided for children and adults, where a local teacher, therapist or other professional had identified equipment that was likely to be suitable, but wanted to confirm this and did not feel there was a need for additional CALL involvement.
- 68% of borrowers provided feedback indicating that 81% of the resources (with an estimated value of £26,700) met the user's needs. The remaining loans were either inconclusive (£6,600) or did not meet the client's needs (£2,200). 77% of borrowers who expressed a view were 'very satisfied' with the CALL loans service and 23% were 'satisfied'.
- Licence terms restrict the loan of software CDs from the Loan Bank for evaluation (although CALL does hold stocks of evaluation and demo CDs for some packages) by pupils or staff. The planned replacement of training laptops will create a small stock of laptops for loan: by installing software on these laptops, we will therefore be able to lend software for evaluation.

New additions to the Loan Bank

178 items with a total value of £24,250 were added to the Loan Bank during the course of the year. Most of these were funded through the SEED Core Grant, but many were provided by suppliers as evaluation copies. New equipment included:

RM nBook UltraLight MkIII. There is increasing need, particularly among CALL clients in secondary schools, for a lightweight, portable laptop capable of running the wide variety of software required in order to access the secondary curriculum. Many of these pupils used Alphasmarts in primary school, but these are no longer sufficient to meet their needs. CALL investigated various laptop options and eventually settled on the RM Ultralight in view of its low weight, reasonable battery life and overall performance.



GoTalk 20+. This is the latest addition to the GoTalk range of lightweight, portable communication aids, with more cells, and therefore more communication options, than its predecessors. There can be a natural progression from other devices in the family, such as the GoTalk 9. Feedback from users has been very positive, so far, with a couple of parents hoping to buy the device for their children.



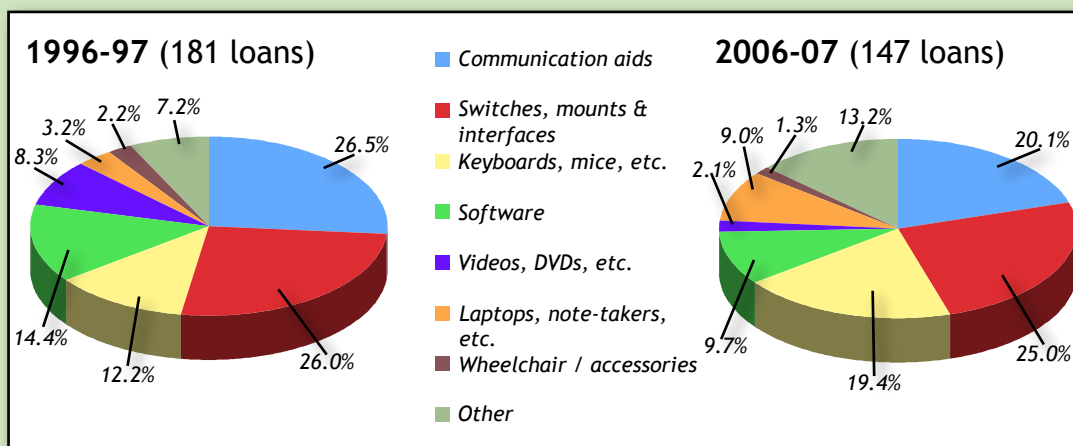
Software. 80 new items were added to the resource bank during the course of the year - most of these were provided by suppliers as evaluation copies. New agreements for the provision of evaluation software have been made with 2Simple and Sherston, to add to existing agreements with Crick Software, Don Johnston, Inclusive Technology, SEMERC, Widgit. Although we are not able to lend most software, people are able to visit the CALL Centre to try software for themselves.



Loans and Technical Services

How has the equipment borrowed changed over time?

We thought it would be interesting to compare the equipment borrowed during 2006 - 2007 with loans made in 1996 - 1997.



- At first glance, there seems to be a decrease in the number of loans of communication aids. This is accounted for by a decrease in loans of simple BIGmack devices (from 22 to 3). Ten years ago these were revolutionary new devices that everyone wanted to try: now they are readily available in most local authorities so there is less need for people to borrow them from CALL. There is now a much greater variety of communication aids available, including a number of dynamic display devices that were not available ten years ago.
- The increase in loans of keyboards and mice reflects a gradual change in the profile of pupils referred to CALL, the majority of whom now have physical or learning disabilities which make it difficult for them to access computers using the standard keyboard and mouse.
- There has been a noticeable increase in loans of note-taking devices. Ten years ago, these were mostly *Psion* devices and the early *Alphasmarts*. More recently the *Alphasmart Neo*, particularly when used in conjunction with the *Co:writer* word prediction software, has taken over as the device of choice for people who have writing difficulties, but are still able to use a keyboard. Most local authorities now have their own stock of such devices, but CALL still lends them on a regular basis to schools and, increasingly, parents.



Vanguard II communication aid

Feedback

Thank you very much! The equipment was used in a training environment and was a huge success. We acknowledge and recommend the CALL Centre in every course and distributed your leaflets.

(Learning disabilities charity)

Excellent - Allowed these children to access computers and enjoy cause/effect software.

(Occupational Therapist)

The CALL Centre Web Sites

The Main CALL Centre Site

<http://www.callcentrescotland.org.uk>

Accessible Digital Curriculum

<http://www.callcentrescotland.org.uk/digitalcurriculum/>

Adapted Digital Exams

<http://www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk>

Books for All

<http://www.booksforall.org.uk>

Personal Communication Passports

<http://www.communicationpassports.org.uk>

WordTalk

<http://www.wordtalk.org.uk>

C ALL Centre

Communication Aids for Language and Learning

Moray House School of Education

The University of Edinburgh

Paterson's Land

Holyrood Road

Edinburgh

EH8 8AQ

Tel. 0131 651 6235 / 6236

Fax 0131 651 6234

Email call.centre@ed.ac.uk

<http://www.callcentrescotland.org.uk>

The CALL Centre provides services and carries out research and development projects, working with all those involved in meeting the needs of people who require augmentative communication and/or specialised technology use, particularly in education.